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**Ukraine in flames**

# Putin’s inferno

**The West must take a tough stand with the government of Ukraine—and with Russia’s leader**

CIVIL strife often follows a grimly predictable pattern. What at first seems a soluble dispute hardens into conflict, as goals become more radical, bitterness accumulates and the chance to broker a compromise is lost. Such has been the awful trajectory of Ukraine, where protests that began peacefully in November have combusted in grotesque violence. The centre of Kiev, one of Europe’s great capital cities, this week became a choking war zone. Buildings and barricades were incinerated and dozens of Ukrainians were killed.

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